Reviewer's report

Title: The outcome of total ankle arthroplasty and ankle fusion in rheumatoid arthritis: a systematic review.

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Reviewer: Alexej Barg

Reviewer's report:

Van Heiningen et al performed a systematic review addressing the outcome of total ankle arthroplasty and ankle arthrodesis in patients with end-stage rheumatoid arthritis. The total ankle arthroplasty is gaining more acceptance among orthopaedic surgeons as alternative treatment in patients with end-stage ankle osteoarthritis. However, there is still limited number of literature addressing the efficacy of this procedure in the subset of patients with rheumatoid osteoarthritis. The authors should be congratulated for careful performing of literature search and execution of the interesting and highly topical study objectives. However, I have some substantial concern which have to be addressed before the manuscript can be accepted for the publication.

1) The literature search has been performed using a well described search algorithm in the PubMed database. However, also other databases should be included into the search algorithm, e.g. Cochrane, EMBASE, CINAHL, or ScienceDirect.

2) Furthermore, also electronic contents of major orthopaedic journals should be searched using the in the manuscript defined keywords.

3) The authors should discussed the critical use of AOFAS hindfoot score, which is non-validated score. AOFAS has recently stated, that this score should not be used anymore.

4) Limitation of this study should be mentioned and discussed in a separate paragraph.

In general, this paper is an important addition to the literature regarding total ankle replacement. It should be published after addressing some concerns listed above.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests